

HEALTH

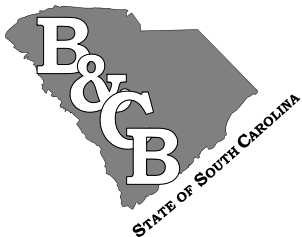
Speak Up: Help Prevent Errors in Your Care

Everyone has a role in making health care safe – physicians, health care executives, nurses, technicians and you! Health care organizations across the country are working to make health care safety a priority. You, as a patient, can also play a vital role in making your care safe by becoming an active, involved and informed member of your health care team. An Institute of Medicine (IOM) report has identified the occurrence of medical errors as a serious problem in the health care system. The “Speak Up” program, sponsored by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, urges patients to get involved in their care.

Tips to Help Prevent Health Care Errors

1. Speak-up if you don’t understand something that your doctor, nurse or health care professional tells you.
2. Don’t hesitate to tell the health care professional if you think he or she has confused you with another patient.
3. Ask your doctor about the specialized training and experience that qualifies him or her to treat your illness (and be sure to ask the same questions of those physicians to whom he or she refers you to).
4. Ask about the purpose of the medicine and ask for written information about it including its brand and generic names. Also inquire about the side effects of the medication.
5. Ask a trusted family member or friend to be your advocate.
6. Don’t be afraid to seek a second opinion. If you are unsure about the nature of your illness and the best treatment, consult with one or two additional specialist. The more information you have about the options available to you, the more confident you will be in the decisions made.

To read the complete Speak Up brochure visit www.jcaho.org/speakup_bro_mpfrm.html



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